



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
[www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/009,327	12/04/2001	Andre Colens	COL 207	6990
9629	7590	01/06/2006	EXAMINER	
MORGAN LEWIS & BOCKIUS LLP 1111 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE NW WASHINGTON, DC 20004			PETRAVICK, MEREDITH C	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3671	

DATE MAILED: 01/06/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>	
	10/009,327	COLENS, ANDRE	
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>	
	Meredith C. Petravick	3671	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 October 2005.
- 2a) This action is FINAL.                            2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 12,14-16,22 and 23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 12,14-16,22 and 23 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 23 April 2003 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
  - a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:
    1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
    2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
    3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ .	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ .

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103*

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 12, 14-16, 20 and 22-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Colens 6,321,515 in view of EP 324322 (Elia), cited by applicant.

Colens discloses a robotic lawn mower with a chassis (1) and a cutting attachment (3).

The cutting attachment is connected to the chassis by a suspension (Fig. 1) so that it can be raised a lowered (Col. 2, lines 61-65 and Col. 5, lines 17-18) when it encounters obstacles on the ground. The cutting attachment includes a motor (Column 2, lines 59-60). Colens states, "The cutting heads can be of the type described in the patent application PCT WO 96/242431." PCT WO 96/242431 discloses a cutting head with a cutting disk (4) on a shaft (3). The cutting disk has blades (5) mounted on the outer edges. However, Colens fails to disclose providing a bottom plate with extensions for guarding the blade against foreign objects.

Like Colens, Elia discloses a device for cutting vegetation that includes a cutting attachment. Unlike Colens, Elia discloses a bottom guard plate under the cutting disk. The bottom guard plate (6) is connected to a pin (15) and bearings (167) between the disk and plate. The guard plate includes coplanar extensions (between recesses 7) that extend out beyond the cutting blade (Column 2, lines 43-44). The extensions keep foreign objects away from the blade.

Elia states, "The protective disc 6 prevents the blade 3 from contacting the body of the operator or obstacles directly whilst enabling material which can penetrate the recesses 7 to be cut. (Column 3, lines 20-24)." The disk is capable of keeping golf balls away from the disk and to lift the cutter disk.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the cutting attachment of Colens with a guard of plate as in Elia, in order to prevent the cutting blade from impacting foreign obstacles.

In regards to claim 14, the extensions in Elia are prong with a rounded profile making hollows and tips with outer ends upwardly curved.

In regards to claim 15, the spacing between the extensions is a design choice based on the type and size of the objected that is unwanted near the blade. The specification lacks criticality for the space between the extensions.

In regards to claim 16, Elia shows 11 extensions in Figure2.

In regards to claims 22-23, the mower in Colens is a robotic mower for use on a golf course (Column 1, lines 22-25), which will have golf balls on it as objects.

#### *Response to Arguments*

3. Applicant's arguments filed 11/29/2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant amended claims 12 to include the limitations that the cutting attachment is connected to the suspension so that the cutting attachment can be raised and lowered. Applicant argues that this is not found in the prior art.

Contrary to Applicant's arguments Colens teaches allowing the cutting attachment to raise and lower when contacted by obstacles on the ground (Col. 2, lines 61-65). In the combination, since the extension is closest to the ground it would inherently cause the cutting attachment through the flexible mounting to lift. Therefore, the limitation is met.

*Conclusion*

4. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Meredith C. Petrvick whose telephone number is 571-272-6995. The examiner can normally be reached on M-T 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thomas B. Will can be reached on 571-272-6998. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Meredith C Petrvick  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 3671

January 4, 2006